

**Environment and Sustainable
Communities Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**



21 July 2022

**Refresh of the Work Programme
2023/24 for Environment and
Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ESC OSC) with an updated draft work programme for 2023/24.

Executive summary

- 2 ESC OSC review their work programme each year to reflect the objectives and associated outcomes and actions identified within the Council Plan and in the context of the County Durham Vision 2035.
- 3 The proposed ESC OSC work programme has been framed around the shared County Durham Vision 2035 based on the three strategic ambitions – ‘more and better jobs’, ‘long and independent lives’ and ‘connected communities’.
- 4 Overview and Scrutiny work programmes are designed to be flexible to accommodate items which may arise throughout the year. This flexibility is particularly important as we have an extensive work programme and we must ensure we are able to accommodate issues that may arise during the term of the work programme.

Recommendations

- 5 The ESC OSC is recommended to:

- a) Receive and comment on the proposed draft work programme for 2023/24 (copy attached at appendix 2).
- b) Agree the ESC OSC work programme for 2023/24 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.
- c) Consider identifying a topic for future light touch review activity.

Background

- 6 Scrutiny committees adapted to the change during the pandemic and some of these adaptations have become a part of business as usual for the committee such as briefing reports being used to provide information to members of the committee and the more recent addition of informal information sessions. The ESCOSC work programme is refreshed annually and takes into consideration the priorities of the Committee and areas identified by the service.
- 7 The current overview and scrutiny committees work programmes are informed by:
 - County Durham Vision 2035
 - Council Plan
 - Cabinet's Notice of Key Decisions
 - Partnership plans and strategies
 - Performance and budgetary control data
 - Changes in government legislation
 - Key questions for improving performance
 - Local priorities
- 8 The County Durham Partnership agreed a Vision for County Durham 2035 which sets out our strategic direction and what we would like to achieve over the next 15 years and is written around three broad ambitions for the people of County Durham:
 - More and better jobs
 - People live long and independent lives
 - Connected communities
- 9 Each ambition contains a number of objectives together with some council specific objectives. The Council Plan is structured around five objectives which capture the three ambitions:
 - Our Economy
 - Our People

- Our Communities
- Our Environment
- Our Council

Council Plan 2023/24-2026/27

- 10 The Council Plan is the primary corporate planning document for the County Council and details Durham County Council's contribution towards achieving the objectives set out in the Vision for County Durham 2035 together with its own change agenda. It aims to provide a readable and accessible summary for members, partners and the public of our priorities for the county and the main programmes of work that we will undertake over the coming three years to help achieve these priorities.
- 11 Both the Vision for County Durham and the Council Plan are structured around the three ambitions which are mentioned above and below are the relevant objectives which apply to the ESC OSC.

More and Better Jobs

- a) A broader experience for residents and visitors to the county

Long and Independent lives

- a) We will create a physical environment that will contribute to good health

Connected Communities

- a) Our towns and villages will be vibrant, well used, clean, attractive and safe
- b) People will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities.

- 12 The Council Plan has been structured around five objectives: Our Economy; Our People; Our Communities; Our Environment and Our Council. The Key Council Plan objectives for ESC OSC are Our Environment and Our Communities.

Current Work programme

- 13 During 2022/23 the ESC OSC prioritised items to be considered at formal meetings of the committee due to the size of the work programme. Reports on other items were circulated via email to members. The committee has undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, visits,

responded to consultations, hosted a workshop and provided an O&S response and considered overview and progress monitoring reports and presentations in relation to the following:

- **Consultations**
 - Library Provision

- **Workshop**
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (CERP 2)

- **Areas of overview and monitoring activity**
 - Fuel Poverty
 - Climate Emergency Response Plan
 - Strategic Waste
 - Fly Tipping
 - Air Quality Management Plan
 - Allotment Improvement Plan
 - Community Action Team Update
 - Ecological Emergency Update
 - Bereavement Services
 - Management of DCC Land for Biodiversity
 - Environment and Climate Change Partnership Update
 - Environmental Campaigns
 - Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham
 - DCC Fleet
 - Heritage Coast

- **Visits undertaken**
 - Thornley Waste Transfer Station
 - Biffa Material Recycling Facility – Hartlepool
 - Suez Recycling and Recovery – Haverton Hill, Stockton-on-Tees
 - Nature Reserves/Parks/Open spaces – Various Locations

- **Budgetary and performance monitoring:**
 - Quarterly budgetary monitoring for the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping.
 - Quarterly corporate performance monitoring for the Neighbourhoods and Climate Change Service Grouping.

14 In addition, the ESC OSC has also considered the following areas which cut across objectives in the Council Plan or cut across the remit of other Overview and Scrutiny Committees including:

- County Durham Visitor Economy
- Regional and Local Transport Policy and Delivery
- Empty Homes
- Empty Properties
- Housing

Areas for Consideration in the ESC OSC Work Programme

15 Members of the ESC OSC are asked to agree the proposed work programme for 2023/24 that has been prepared and is attached at appendix two. The work programme is very comprehensive drawing on topical areas across the remit of the committee and it should be noted that it is also flexible.

16 Paragraph 13 of the report identifies the activity undertaken by the committee during 2022/23. The committee is asked to consider areas for inclusion in the work programme for 2023/24 in light of the current Council Plan and the Vision for County Durham 2035. Appendix 2 of this report sets out a draft work programme for consideration.

17 Members are encouraged to consider identifying areas of scrutiny investigation (for light touch review) from the work programme.

Conclusion

18 The work programme identifies areas of work that fall within the remit of ESC OSC and is flexible in its delivery.

Background papers

- [Council Plan](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

Authors:	Ann Whitton	Tel: 03000 268143
	Diane Close	Tel: 03000 268141
	Stephen Gwilym	Tel: 03000 268140

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Not applicable

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is an important element of the Council's governance and risk management arrangements.

Procurement

Not applicable